

4Q 2008 Atonement and Cross of Christ

Lesson 2

Cosmic Crisis: The Disruption of God' Established Order

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This lesson is all about the Great Controversy and how Lucifer made his decision to defy God's character and his universal principles.

The origin of sin is often called a mystery and we could make ourselves crazy trying to figure out how selfishness and sin even came to be thought of in the presence of God.

Read Sabbath's lesson 1st and 2nd paragraph.

This is what we will be studying today—the conflict between truth and error, between selfless giving and selfishness, between freedom and coercion.

Questions

How do we explain the origin and existence of evil? How do we counter the argument that a loving God would not permit evil and suffering? What alternatives are there to the method God chooses to use? Why is freedom so important to God? Why didn't God destroy Lucifer as soon as he began to rebel?

Imagine

Imagine you have been accused of doing something you have not done, of being someone you are not. That happened to me this week. I was accused of saying something that I did not. And it affected my relationships. I wanted to become defensive and shout to the world that someone lied. I wanted to lash out and defame someone else's character since they smashed mine. I wanted to show them that I was better than that, but how does one go about that?

You may become defensive, and loudly deny the charges made against you. You may be hurt, wondering how you could even be suspected of being such a person and acting in such a way. You may react in like manner, responding to the charge with a counter-charge, pointing out the wrong in the accuser.

But if you are God, how would you—how should you—respond? By angrily denying such accusations? By destroying the one who had such audacity to accuse you? By challenging the accuser to a test of strength and power?

God faced such a situation when rebellion began in his universe. And the way God chose to deal with the accusations and challenges says much about his true nature and character. For it is not how you deal with friends that best reveals who you are, but how you deal with enemies...

Sunday

Origin of Sin & Thursday War in Heaven

Revelation 12:7 "war in heaven"

What was the war about? Ezekiel 28: 2, 12-17 Pride Isaiah 14:12-14 "I will"

What is this thing about wanting more? Being like a god? Having, desiring, and probing for more. From a friend—"So how can we KNOW truth and think God like thoughts. That ability is in our grasp, it lies at the source of our life, it is that still small voice in all of us asking us to stop and listen. But it's not always easy to hear or recognize God's voice. Ps.46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God."

- Is there anything harder than learning to be still? Turn off the TV, put down the newspaper, silence your cell phone, take off the ear phones, turn off the radio, and stop the overhead announcements and calls for your attention. Have you ever wondered why now at what appears to be the nearing of the end that there is so much noise? How can we get away from the constant bombardment of information that is out there so you can be enticed to please yourself? All the encouragement to achieve, "you can do it", all you need is this new car, this new house, this new wife, this new makeover to be happy and to reach your goal. We are always wanting more, and the minute we get something there is a new model to replace the one we just got. We can't find ourselves in things. That is why Jesus said 'if someone takes your shirt, let him have your coat as well.' Stop the noise! We even have to stop it in our head."

How do we stop the noise, the cravings, the constant bombardment? What would that look like, feel like?

Monday

Attack on God

Read 4th paragraph on Monday's lesson.

Lies about God and that still goes on today. Philosophers have continued to deface and slander God's name.

Think of all the times the Devil has spread false ideas about God. Right from the beginning, Satan has been lying to humankind about the kind of person God is. First to Eve, then through Eve to Adam (Genesis 3). Then to Cain, in convincing him to rebel against the "arbitrary" worship requirements of God, leading him eventually to murder his righteous brother (Genesis 4). Then to all the inhabitants of the earth before the Flood. The time in which "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5).

How successful has the Devil been in his campaign of celestial rumors? The evidence is all around. Atheism and agnosticism of all kinds; God getting the blame for everything and praise for nothing; a Devil-inspired ignorance of God that denies God not only of his real nature, but also his personality, even his very existence. God is only a mockery of God: a George Burns figure croaking out his jokes; a Santa Claus image no longer believed in by adults; a pathetic persona left on the sidelines of history.

An enormous tribute to the lying rumors Satan has spread about God. So successful are his misrepresentations that a belief in God is equated with irrationality. Faith is seen in opposition to common sense--something done *despite* what you know to be true. To Voltaire, observing religious faith in his time, "Faith consists in believing not what seems true, but what seems false to our understanding." Trust in the God of the Bible is not supposed to make any sense at all—so the Devil suggests. Such reasoning leads either to belief that makes no sense or to no belief whatever—both of

which achieves the Devil's aims. (from Gallagher)

The devil portrays God as the one who does not make sense. Father of lies Jn 8:44

Tuesday

Sin and the Law of God

Your law is in my heart (Ps 40:8). The law is an expression of the character of the lawgiver. What does the law tell us about God's character?

The law tells us that he would do anything to safeguard relationships. If the law is followed you will be able to trust God and your fellow man. You will adore God, worship him, talk only good about him, and spend time with him. You will respect your fellow man, tell him the truth, you won't steal, covet his stuff, or sleep with his mate. You will in essence show love and truth.

1Jn 3:4 whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law, because sin is a breaking of the law.

Lawlessness - lesson says is a deep seated attitude in the heart of a rebellious human being. If we are rebellious will we want to follow or keep the law? If we enjoy finding what is wrong, then will we want to do the law?

What are the subtle ways that Satan is trying to get us away from God and his love?

Selfish behavior

Looking out for self

Busyness

I "can do" it by myself

Independence from community

Watching actors "do life" instead of "doing life" yourself

Wednesday

Sin as Rebellion Against God's Government

God was and is and He created our universe. Col 1:16,17 & Col 3:14

Share about the laminin in the body that holds the cells together and the molecule is in the shape of a cross.

Even in Job we see Satan charging God... Job 1:8-11

These are the same charges Lucifer brought before God at the rebellion in heaven.

Job served God out of selfish concerns—He blessed him

And God blessed Job to gain His service or respect or love.....

And if we get into trouble, then we will rebel and forget God?

Did Job stay faithful?

Would we stay faithful?

Do you have faith in God in this financial crisis?

Are you depending on self or God?

Who are your friends? Are they helping you or pulling you down?

Will you survive personally, financially, emotionally, and show others the character of God?

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her 'How God could let something like this happen?' (regarding Katrina) Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response.. She said, 'I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?'

DA 764 Christ says “All that hate Me, love death” Eph 4:18, Prov 8:36 God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.

Let's go back to the question: Why does God allow evil?

Greek philosopher Epicurus framed it well some three centuries before Christ:

“The gods can either take away evil from the world and will not, or, being willing to do so, cannot; or they neither can nor will, or lastly, they are both able and willing. If they have the will to remove evil and cannot, then they are not omnipotent. If they can, but will not, than they are not benevolent. If they are neither able nor willing, then they are neither omnipotent nor benevolent. Lastly, if they are both able and willing to annihilate evil, how does it exist?”

Frequent conclusions are that:

- God is not all-powerful, because he does not remove evil even though he can
- God is not all-loving, since he either created or permits evil to exist
- God is not all-wise, since he does not seem to know or admit that evil exists

He had to allow sin to play itself out in order for God to not appear arbitrary or forceful. He had to come and live and die to show what evil/sin does. It takes time to show that you really are who you say you are and not what someone else says. He had to let evil show its' nasty head.

What is the alternative? For God to intervene in every situation? To stop the car crashing, to prevent the earthquake, to defuse the terrorist's bomb? The result would be a world in which evil is never seen for what it truly is, for it never has its diabolical consequences—a world of eternal evil that can have no end.

Only as the conflict is resolved through the unmasking of evil's real face, only as God is demonstrated to be the loving, compassionate Being he says he is, only as all his creation agrees with him that he was right all along—only then can God bring this rebellion to a close. Those who have chosen the Devil's way will be allowed their choice of final non-existence in the end-time destruction. And then, and only then, can God create a new heaven and a new earth, a place where righteousness dwells and where the goodness of God reigns supreme (see 2 Peter 3:13). (from Gallagher - pineknoll.org)